

sort of proposal. It made sense to me, and so I agreed to this amendment. It also makes sense to me to say to those school districts again, that have bitten the bullet years ago, put their property into a K-12 district, have been supporting a high school district to allow them to continue. The argument has been made, by Senator Lamb, Senator Warner, Senator Schmit that there are high schools in this state that are inferior in quality to some Class I school districts. And there is no doubt about that. I would not disagree with that that there probably are. The problem is that the inferior Class I school district, and I know Senator Lamb this summer was quoted as indicating, yes, there are some problem Class I districts in the state, they can exist in perpetuity. Those citizens in a high school district that have to maintain an accreditation standard, or even an approval standard, with declining enrollments, continue to offer those course offerings that they are required to to stay open just aren't able to do that. The economics of our state are going to take care of the problems of the small Class II high schools in the state, more so than any type of mandated plan coming from the state. The Class Is can exist in perpetuity. I've got one in my district that really is not a bastion of quality education, but they have a nice property tax levy, one-fourth of mine. And they can continue to keep that school district open in perpetuity with the tools that they have available to them. The small Class II high school, those people on that school board are going to have to bite the bullet. By putting this 65 percent language back into the bill, we give them the tools to formulate their own reorganization plan and keeping the state department and the state reorganization committee out of it. I know there has been some talk about this is a divide and conquer amendment,...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...that this is an unfair amendment. I, honestly, would not be here before you with this amendment. I'm realizing today that probably offering this amendment is causing more problems for the bill than having gone ahead and trying to push the bill through as it was originally written. But I thought that those folks who represented the small rural high schools made a strong case to me and, as the chairman of the committee, I wanted to listen to their concerns and pay attention, and they convinced me that they have a legitimate problem. They came and suggested some changes and we're going forward with those. I thank Senator Moore for offering this amendment. It does weaken the original intent of my bill, I